

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets make changes to Figs. 1-4 and replace the original sheets with Figs. 1-7.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 12 are amended, the specification and abstract are amended and the drawings are amended.

I. The Drawings Satisfy Formal Requirements

The drawings are objected to for not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Accordingly, Figures 1-4 are replaced with Figures 1-7. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

II. The Specification Satisfies Formal Requirements

The Abstract is objected to for containing the phrase "the invention relates to." Accordingly, the Abstract is amended. Withdrawal of the objection to the Abstract is respectfully requested.

III. Claim 12 Satisfies the Requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Accordingly, claim 12 is amended. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is respectfully requested.

IV. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 1-3, 6, 8, 10 and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,125,796 to Cromer; claims 1-3 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2003/0039542 A1 to Cromer; claims 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Cromer 542; claims 1-3, 7, 9, 11-12, 14 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,752,598 to Bowers in view of Cromer 542; and claims 1-3, 6, 8, 10 and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,375,973 to Sloop in view of Cromer 542. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Cromer '796 does not teach, disclose or suggest that each strip has a portion formed along at least part of its width to locate in the at least one groove, as claimed in claim 1.

Instead, Cromer discloses arcuate segments 50a and 50b and 52a and 52b. Segments 50a and 50b extend from opposite edges of the base portion 54 and out of its plane to one side of the base portion 54. Segments 50a and 50b extend arcuately toward one another and define a slot 58 therebetween for receiving the flange 44. As such, the use of the arcuate segments for location in a groove is not taught or suggested in Cromer. As such, Cromer teaches each seal having two arcuate segments which it needs to receive the flange. In contrast, claim 1 recites a portion formed ... to locate in the at least one groove."

Additionally, Cromer '796 does not disclose that each strip has a portion formed to locate in the at least one groove with the remaining portion having a substantially flat surface. Instead, Cromer teaches a seal having an arcuate portion and the remainder having a flat portion with an additional arcuate portion.

Additionally, Cromer 542 does not teach features recited in claim 1. Specifically, claim 1 recites in part at least two resilient sealing strips. In contrast, Cromer 542 teaches that the shim layer assemblage comprises at least one shim layer. Please see paragraph [0027]. Accordingly, the relative motion between the shim layers is minimal and plays no part in the operation of the seal. As such, the shim assembly acts as one component despite the fact that it may be a laminate structure.

Additionally, the seal has a portion formed in the groove with the remainder of the seal having a flat portion and an additional arcuate portion. However, claim 1 of the present invention recites a seal comprising at least two resilient sealing strips, each strip having a portion formed to locate in the at least one groove, the remaining portion having a

substantially flat surface. Accordingly, Cromer 542 does not disclose the features recited in claim 1.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Neither Bowers nor Sloop, in view of the teachings of Cromer 542, renders obvious the features of at least independent claim 1. Specifically, both Bowers and Sloop refer to a single strip seal. In contrast, the claimed invention recites two resilient sealing strips. Accordingly, one of skill in the art would not have been motivated to develop a sealing strip as recited in claim 1 given the disclosures of Cromer 542 and Bowers or Sloop because they comprise effectively only one sealing element and seal by entirely different mechanisms than the claimed invention. Additionally, one of ordinary skill would realize that Cromer 542 and Bowers or Sloop operate by a single seal strip being forced against the groove material. In contrast, the sealing in exemplary embodiments of the invention, occurs due to the pressure difference across the gap causing the flat surfaces of the sealing strips to be forced together.

In fact, Applicant respectfully submits that only the present application suggests the claimed combination of features. As such, the asserted combination of Cromer 542 and Bowers or Sloop was made using improper hindsight reconstruction of the references.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103 is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-16 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Amended Abstract
Replacement Sheets

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